



## What Can We Do?

Grade Level : 5

### Subjects:

Communication Skills 1.1,  
1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2  
The Arts 1.3, 2.2, 2.3

### Time:

two classes

### Setting:

classroom, tour of the  
school

### Materials:

paper and crayons for the  
posters

### Skills:

observing, communicating,  
analyzing

### Vocabulary:

this will depend on what  
you find, and the plan you  
come up with

### Source:

Watauga County  
Recycling Curriculum  
Committee

**Summary:** These lessons show the students how much solid waste your school generates, and encourages them to think about a class-wide or school-wide program to reduce this amount by reducing, reusing, and recycling. This can be as simple as using both sides of their notebook paper, or as complex as a recycling program for the whole school. What's important is that the kids see that there's an awful lot of trash leaving the school each week, and that there are things they can do to reduce it. You will tour the building, identify a problem, come up with a solution, then make posters to publicize your program.

### Objective:

The student will:

- define: reduce, reuse, recycle
- observe locations, types, and amounts of solid waste in the school building.
- participate in a discussion of the amount, type, and location of trash in the building.
- contribute to a classroom plan for reducing solid waste in the building.
- plan and produce a poster to publicize the classroom plan.

**Background:** Tons of solid waste materials leave our schools every day. Too much of this material ends up in a landfill which drains our natural resources and creates problems for the environment.

**Leading Question:** "Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without" Old Vermont Proverb.

### Procedure:

Take a walking tour of the building, pointing out where trash is stored, and how much there is. The cafeteria, custodians' trash cans, copier room (to see the copies that didn't make it to the classroom), or anywhere trash accumulates before it is taken out (you may want to scout these sites out ahead). When you get back to class, write the proverb on the board, and ask what it means, and how it could apply to the walk you just took. Go over reduce, reuse, recycle, as they apply to the proverb. Ask the kids if they saw any places in the school where one of these could work. Some ideas are: recycling paper (notebook, copier, computer), drink cans, glass, plastic, food cans from the kitchen, corrugated cardboard, newspaper, etc.; reusing in the classroom, cafeteria, office, and custodial areas. Brainstorm ideas on the board; get the kids to focus on one specific goal; and develop a program to do it. The kids will then make posters publicizing the program.

### What Now?

1. You can get other classes in your grade level and the school to join in and expand your project.
2. Find out the cost for picking up and dumping the school's trash.

